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PARIS AND LONDON FOR AFRICA WATHCERS

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SUBJECT: CHAD GENERAL KILLED IN AMBUSH BY REBELS

11. (SBU) Summary: A leading Chadian general died of his wounds after being ambushed by the rebel group Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD). Government of Chad reports of Sudanese bombing in Chad's north eastern border region were contradicted by humanitarian groups on the ground. End Summary.

Ambush in Hadjer Meram  
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12. (SBU) At approximately 05:30 local time on October 29 in the town of Hadjer Meram, three columns of Chadian army forces (ANT), led respectively by General Bahar Itno (cousin of President Deby), General Moussa Sougui (an Embassy contact) and General Allanga Hemchi, fell into an ambush of the rebel group Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD).

13. (SBU) As with most clashes between Government and rebel forces, accurate numbers of casualties were virtually impossible to ascertain. UFDD sources reported 215 Chadian army (ANT) and 15 UFDD forces killed, while Chadian Defense Minister Bichara Issa Djadallah asserted that 100 rebels and only four ANT were killed. According to UNHCR N'Djamena, later on October 29 ANT forces entered Kou Kou-Angarana, south of the Goz Beida region in which the fighting occurred, commandeered the ambulance operated by Cooperazione Internazionale, the Italian NGO which administers the Goz Beida Hospital, and attempted to transport wounded government forces to the Goz Beida hospital. There are reportedly up to 40 ANT troops in Goz Beida hospital.

14. (SBU) Among the ANT forces lost was General Moussa Sougui, the third highest-ranking general in the Chadian military. UNHCR reported that Sougui was shot in the shoulder during Hadjer Meram combat but was not critically wounded. However, he suffered massive blood loss during the subsequent march from Hadjer Meram to Goz Beida and died in the hospital there.

15. (SBU) Humanitarian operations in the Goz Beida region continue, although UNHCR notes that most organizations have no additional security resources at their disposal were continued or intensified conflict to emerge.

Government of Chad protests bombing of border towns  
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16. (SBU) Earlier in the weekend, the Government of Chad has accused Sudan of bombing the northern border towns of Bahai, Tine, Kariari and Bamina. (Kariari was the site of the National Redemption Front (NRF)/Government of Sudan clash earlier in October.) However, humanitarian groups on the ground in Bahai say that they have neither seen nor heard any evidence of bombing.

Comment:

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17. (SBU) On December 22, 2005, General Sougui sustained serious burns when his helicopter was shot down. He was a popular and thoughtful leader, and it is expected that his loss will be a serious blow to morale. UNHCR contacts predicted that the GOC would have to contend with significant morale loss and desertions within its military ranks in the days ahead. Sougui's funeral October 30 in N'djamena was widely attended and the funeral cortege disrupted regular traffic for much of the morning. Eyewitnesses in Bahai reported that the Sudanese rebels of the National Redemption Front also held a ceremony there to mark his death, another indication of the close relationship between the NRF and the ANT.  
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